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EXDIS

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STATE/DEFENSE MESSAGE

REF: SAIGON 8511

SUBJECT: TET CEASEFIRE

1. WE CONCUR WITH GENERAL THRUST OF YOUR MESSAGE AND BELIEVE YOU SHOULD TAKE UP MATTER WITH THIEU ALONG FOLLOWING LINES:

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A. OUR MILITARY VIEW (AMPLIFIED AS YOU SEE FIT) IS THAT TET CEASEFIRE SHOULD NOT APPLY IN 1ST CORPS AND DMZ AREAS.

B. SIMILARLY, WE BELIEVE IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO CONTINUE BOMBING AGAINST SUPPLY ROUTES IN NVN SOUTH OF VINH TO MEET THEIR OBVIOUS RELEVANCE TO EXISTING MILITARY SITUATION IN NORTHERN AREAS OF SVN.

C. TACTICALLY, WE BELIEVE SITUATION CAN BEST BE HANDLED BY PLANNING NOW FOR ANNOUNCEMENT OF THESE EXCEPTIONS TO THE CEASEFIRE APPROXIMATELY TWELVE HOURS BEFORE THE TRUCE GOES INTO EFFECT. SUCH DELAY WOULD PERMIT US TO EXPLAIN OUR ACTION IN LIGHT OF THE THEN EXISTING TACTICAL SITUATION AND ALSO WOULD INCREASE HANOI'S DIFFICULTIES IN ATTEMPTING TO MAKE RAPID ADJUSTMENTS IN THEIR PREPARATIONS.

D. IF YOU CONCUR, YOU ARE AUTHORIZED TO PROCEED ALONG THESE LINES AT ONCE WITH THIEU AND REPORT. MORE EXACT MILITARY INSTRUCTIONS WILL BE WORKED OUT THROUGH MILITARY CHANNELS. WE LEAVE IT TO THIEU WHETHER HE FEELS HE SHOULD COORDINATE WITH

OTHER TROOP CONTRIBUTING NATIONS, BUT OUR SUGGESTION WOULD BE THAT THIS BE DONE JUST PRIOR TO THE PLANNED ANNOUNCEMENT.

3. IN VIEW OF INTERNATIONAL INTEREST, WE BELIEVE THAT TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT SHOULD BE AGREED UPON IN ADVANCE BETWEEN SAIGON AND WASHINGTON.

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